

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 NIC-01 EUR-25 SAJ-01 DRC-01 /141 W

----- 030581

R 141735Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5243

C O N F I D E N T I A L NASSAU 281

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CU, BF

SUBJECT: BAHAMIAN FOREIGN MINISTER'S REMARKS ON CUBA

1. IN COURSE OF CONVERSATION CONCERNING MEXICO CITY
MF (SEPT), GCOB MINEXTAFF PAUL ADDERLEY ASKED AMBASSADOR
WHETHER THERE WAS ANY EXPECTATION OF IMMEDIATE
CHANGE IN US POLICY TOWARD CUBA. AMBASSADOR RESPONDED
THAT USG POLICY REMAINED UNCHANGED, AND ADDERLEY NOTED
RESPONSE.

2. ADDERLEY EXPRESSED HIS PERSONAL HOPE THAT RELATIONS
BETWEEN THE BAHAMAS' "CLOSEST NEIGHBOR TO THE NORTH AND
CLOSEST NEIGHBOR TO THE SOUTH" COULD BE NORMALIZED. HE
SAID, HOWEVER, THAT THE BAHAMIAN ATTITUDE WAS NOT
UNAMBIGUOUS. HE NOTED THAT AS A TOURIST CENTER THE BAHAMAS
COULD NOT IGNORE THE FACT THAT THE TOURIST BOOM DURING THE
SIXTIES WAS DIRECTLY TIED TO CLOSURE OF CUBA TO U.S. AND
OTHER WESTERN TOURISTS AND THAT A US-CUBAN THAW WOULD
HURT ALREADY DECLINING BAHAMIAN TOURIST REVENUES. ON
THE OTHER HAND, ADDERLEY NOTED GCOB EMBARRASSMENT AT
CLASHES BETWEEN US-BASED AND HAVANA BASED CUBANS IN
VICINITY OF BAHAMAS, AND POINTED SPECIFICALLY TO INCIDENT
LATE LAST SUMMER IN WHICH RIVAL CUBAN GROUPS HAD A GUNBATTLE
IN (AS ADDERLEY PUT IT) "INTERNATIONAL WATERS ABOVE THE
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BAHAMAS BANKS." ADDERLEY SAID INCIDENT WAS PARTICULARLY

EMBARRASSING SINCE MEDIA REPORTS ASSUMED THAT BAHAMAS SHOULD HAVE INTERVENED TO STOP SHOOTING, AND HE SUGGESTED THAT IF ARCHIPELAGO CLAIM WERE ACCEPTED BAHAMAS WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CONTROL THAT, AND ANY FUTURE, UNOFFICIAL CONFRONTATION. ADDERLEY TOOK NOTE OF FACT THAT OPINION OF LATINS AND EVEN CARIBBEANS WAS SPLIT CONCERNING POSSIBLE OAS LIFTING OF SANCTIONS AND WELCOMING OF CUBA INTO HEMISPHERIC SYSTEM, AND HE UNDERSTANDS USG POSITION THEREON. HE EXPRESSED, NEVERTHELESS, DESIRE THAT GCOB BE BRIEFED PRIOR TO ANY DRAMATIC STEP TO IMPROVE US-CUBAN RELATIONS, SHOULD ONE BE ENVISAGED.

3. ADDERLEY RECOUNTED STORY CONCERNING HAVANA DELEGATION WHICH ARRIVED LAST MONTH TO ARRANGE RELEASE OF CUBAN FISHING POACHERS. DELEGATION ASKED GCOB PROSECUTOR HOW THEY SHOULD PREPARE TO PAY POACHERS COURT FINES AND PROSECUTOR REPLIED THAT CUBANS SHOULD ARRANGE CHASE OR FIRST NATIONAL CITY BANK DRAFT TO COVER SAME. ONLY OTHER POSSIBILITY PROSECUTOR ADVISED WAS "TO TAKE THE MONEY OUT OF YOUR SUITCASES AND PAY IN CASH." PROSECUTOR REPORTED TO ADDERLEY THAT HAVANA DELEGATION HAD LOOKED AROUND IN SOME CONSTERNATION AT LATTER PORTION OF PROSECUTOR'S SUGGESTION. WHEN TIME CAME AROUND TO PAY FINES NEXT DAY, CUBAN DELEGATION OPENED SUITCASE IN COURT AND COUNTED OUT ASSESSED FINE IN FRESH \$20.00 BILLS. THE JOKE TO ADDERLEY WAS THAT CASH PAYMENT ADVICE BY PROSECUTOR WAS INTENDED FACETIOUSLY, BUT THAT HAVANA DELEGATION HAD ASSUMED THAT BAHAMIAN CUSTOMS OFFICIALS HAD X RAYED DELEGATION'S LUGGAGE UPON ARRIVAL AND DISCOVERED CACHE OF US CURRENCY, WHICH HAD PROMPTED PROSECUTOR'S SUGGESTION. ADDERLEY COMMENTED THAT THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME ANYONE HAD OVER-RATED BAHAMIAN TECHNOLOGICAL CAPABILITY.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DETENTE, TOURISM, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 FEB 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974NASSAU00281
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: NASSAU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740232/aaaabegc.tel
Line Count: 94
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 SEP 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <10 DEC 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BAHAMIAN FOREIGN MINISTER'S REMARKS ON CUBA
TAGS: PFOR, CU, BF, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005